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THERE MUST BE A PONY IN HERE SOMEWHERE\* THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

## Jobs and Money: What Are You Whining About?

Published: Tuesday, 29 Mar 2011 | 10:27 AM ET

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The economy may be showing signs of improvement but there's still a lot to complain about for the average American worker. Nearly 14 million people remain unemployed and for the lucky few who have jobs, many are overworked and underpaid.



Ryan McVay | Getty Images

I don't like this economy!

"Everyone is struggling — whether it's their boss, budget cuts, not enough people to do the work or changing initiatives," said Julie Jansen, a career coach and the author of "[I Don't Know What I Want But I Know It's Not This.](#)"

In fact, if anything, there are more complaints today than there were in the middle of the recession because now, those who are working have finally stopped

being scared about losing their jobs and are feeling like they can speak up about the hardships they endured over the past few years while companies were cutting costs.

That's why Jansen decided to team up with her brother, [wine consultant Chris Jansen](#), for a night of "Wine & Whine" in Stamford, Conn. What better way to get people to attend your event than to offer them a chance to complain?!

The numbers alone were telling: There were at least 30 people who attended the event on a chilly March night and there was a waiting list of 23 more people. That's right, there's a waiting list for complaints in Connecticut!

*Imagine a long line at the deli counter and a lady in a hairnet and dirty apron announces, "No. 45? No. 45? Yes, step up to the counter, sir. What's your complaint?!"*

Plug the words "job" and "complain" into a search engine and you'll get a whopping 30 million results — Everything from web sites that invite you to submit your complaints, to statistics about complaining and yes, even tips for how to make your complaints the best EVER.

So what are people complaining about?

First of all, money.

"Everyone I talk to says they're working twice as hard for half the money," Jansen said.

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himself as a CFO-in-transition but asked not to be identified by name, said age discrimination is much bigger now than ever before. And, he's tired of hearing that older workers aren't flexible.

"Things are starting to come back but not for everyone," said the man, who added that he's a black belt in the business-management strategy **Six Sigma**, but is having a hard time re-entering the workforce.

"There's a general perception that as an older worker, you're not with it, you're not flexible, but you are!" chimed in **Maurene Caplan Grey**, who runs a research and consulting business in Kent Lakes, NY.

Overall, workplace discrimination complaints are on the rise since the recession began. Complaints based on race, sex or other category rose 7 percent last year to a record 99,000, according to the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**. And, that was up 21 percent from 2007, before the recession began.



What pairs better with wine than wine?!

At the "Wine & Wine" event, there was even a complaint about complaining about age discrimination: A woman in her 40s, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said it's older workers who created the very business culture that they feel is now discriminating against them based on their age.

But wait. It doesn't stop at 40.

The twenty- and thirty-something guys over at **GetRaised.com**, a web site that helps coach you to ask for a raise, say they're tired of people saying that Generation Y is lazy and self-entitled, when this is the generation that graduated into a terrible economy. The Gen Ys who have been lucky enough to get jobs often find themselves hired as freelancers or contractors, which means no benefits — and no job security.

"From day one, we told [Gen Y] that they were special flowers. And we had a very specific message — don't drink, don't do drugs, don't do any of that bad stuff and you'll graduate and life will be great," said Matt Wallaert, the research guy at GetRaised.com. "So you do those things, thinking you have the advantage, and when you get out, those things didn't happen ... No full-time job, no insurance, no 401(k)!" he exclaimed.

No matter what age you are, or whether you're employed or not, one thing is clear: This economy has given everyone something to complain about.

At the "Wine & Whine" event, there was also a complaint about being nice! Specifically, that in this economy, where it's every person for themselves, it doesn't pay to be nice.

"Being nice isn't rewarded in the workplace. In fact, it can be a detriment to promotion!" proclaimed one woman, who asked not to be identified.

**Chuck Scott**, who runs a multimedia-production company in Ridgefield, Conn., and writes a blog called "**Chucking It**," said, speaking of nice, there's one thing business owners seemed to have forgotten in this economy: Service. We've all been so busy trying to make a profit, trying to stay afloat, that we've forgotten to be nice to the people we're seeking money from.

In a recent blog post, Scott fumes about companies that "think like pirates and thugs, believing they are entitled to raise the annual renewal price every year just because they can get away with it." And, he's tired of having cool promotions offered to him only to find out later they don't apply to him.

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At the "Wine & Wine" event, Katie Scott, who is the volunteer coordinator for [Guiding Eyes for the Blind](#), said that part of their employee review involves how nice they are to the animals and the other humans — something other companies would do well to adopt in their employee reviews.

Jansen, who does career coaching and employee training, said the economy is starting to improve but in a different way. For the past two years, companies would say "We don't have the budget to hire you," Jansen said. Now, they're saying, "We know we need to hire you, but we only have a small budget."

And, while employees have complained since the dawn of time, times have changed when it comes to what they're complaining about. Before the recession, workers' biggest complaints were that their raises weren't big enough, technology was changing too fast and employers weren't giving enough time off, Jansen said.

Now, based on the floodgate of complaints that has been unleashed in this economy, it's things like discrimination and the demise of the nice guy. Complaining about too small of a raise looks like a frivolous relic of the past.

On [JobSchmob.com](#), a web site that aggregates employee complaints, the list of grievances ranges from bosses who expect too much to idiot co-workers who get promoted instead of you.

*Doesn't that just make your blood boil?*

Oh and there's irony. Sweet, infuriating irony. There are so many complaints nowadays that there are more than 88,000 jobs on [Indeed.com](#) with the word "complaint" in the job description — everything from a product-complaint specialist for Johnson & Johnson to a complaint and appeal analyst for Aetna.

I think this guy [speaks for all of us](#) when he says:



*Pop! Pop! Pop! Slam. Slam. Pop! Pop! Whoosh. Ga-gunk. CRASH!*

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**PinkZepellin** | Mar 29, 2011 11:39 AM ET

I guess people could always just trade forex for a living. Just kidding. Forex is a scam. The "secret" scam used by almost every forex broker:

<http://newworldorange.blogspot.com/2011/03/forex-get-scammed-or-get-rich.html>

As the article states, you can make a lot of money trading foreign currency. Just don't use what people commonly understand as "forex" (buy/sell currency pairs and pay a pip spread). The way to do it is to buy/sell foreign currency futures.

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**GovyGuy** | Mar 29, 2011 11:49 AM ET

Bottom line is everyone is Not Happy.

This is not good for Politicians because it will be taken out on them.

The one power you never lose is the power to vote.

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**mountainbiker** | Mar 29, 2011 11:51 AM ET

CEOs, business owners talk about hiring but I believe they secretly love our unemployment rate. It sure is not hurting their profitability. As soon as every worker in this country realizes we are all Free Agents they can plan accordingly. I know a bunch of highly qualified men and women in their 50s and 60s who cannot find permanent work.

I also believe that all resources are finite. As emerging economies grow seeking a better life it will dilute our way of life and I think we are seeing that now. Earth is not capable of supporting the entire world's population at our standard of living.

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**SJC3** | Mar 29, 2011 12:19 PM ET

People live in fear that they will lose the jobs that they hate...what a life.

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**curlqgur1** | Mar 29, 2011 12:24 PM ET

My step daughter is a medical biller and the doctors in LA have lost lots of patients due to lack of medical insurance. She is doing the work they used to have 2 1/2 people do. And when the doctors take a day off, they now make the staff do the same, with no pay. She was working a job prior to this one that paid about 20 percent more. She is making up the money in overtime, but she has a young daughter and it makes it hard. America is in trouble. This recession is not over.

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**Fredomlvr** | Mar 29, 2011 12:34 PM ET

There are no Jobs, so we have no money, so we complain about that! Government does not listen or care so we revolt! Anyone not understand the oldest concept in history?

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**sasdf883df** | Mar 29, 2011 12:35 PM ET

"This is not good for Politicians because it will be taken out on them. "

No, this is great for politicians. They make money by getting donations for campaigns and just like the market, the more volatile things are, the more opportunities to make money.

We only have 2 parties, so they count on rehash. If we were content then there would be no money in politics.

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**tradereye** | Mar 29, 2011 12:45 PM ET

Ah, excuse me, Pink Zeppelin: FOREX IS NOT A SCAM. I am a Forex trader for five years. There are many Forex brokers who will scam you but it is up to YOU to do your due diligence. Most reputable firms are regulated and well funded (CFTC.org)so they DO NOT have to take your money to survive. Secondly, futures markets are vastly different than equity markets, and it behooves YOU to learn the nuances. I personally know of many traders who make a comfortable living with Forex, but it is intricate and requires a good deal of screen time and learning before you become profitable. Same as any other business endeavor. I suggest that you do some very heavy research before you invest and also take advantage of the multitudes of free information, including demo trading platforms and hang out with some professional traders (and I don't mean the get-rich-quick BS artists, but REAL traders) I have had the privilege of learning from some of the pros and am still learning...and becoming profitable because I am beginning to understand it.

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**GovyGuy** | Mar 29, 2011 12:56 PM ET

sasdf883df

"No, this is great for politicians. They make money by getting donations for campaigns and just like the market, the more volatile things are, the more opportunities to make money."

How does that statement support the evidence we have seen in the historic 2010 elections?

A lot of politicians got bounced.

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**Jay070** | Mar 29, 2011 01:10 PM ET

America is one big lie. The money system is fraudulent. The leisure class is stealing all the wealth produced by everyone else.

Poor and middle class working people are just supposed to sit back and take it as our jobs disappear, pay less and can't even provide for the basics in life ( which the rich will provide for a hefty price ).

Ron Paul - get going on monetary reform now. We need alternative forms of currency to the Federal Reserve Notes we are forced to used now.

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